

**California's Child Welfare System – Moving Towards Redesign**  
**EARLY INTERVENTION & DIFFERENTIAL RESPONSE**  
**Decision Points Where Fairness & Equity can be Addressed & Evaluated**

<u>Point in Case Flow:</u>	<u>Decision Options:</u>	<u>Decision Makers:</u>
<p>Hotline:</p> <p>Early Intervention</p> <p>Differential Response</p>	<p>Offer services/Not offer services</p> <p>Refer to Emergency Response</p> <p>Refer to Community-Based Agency</p>	<p>Hotline worker</p> <p>Mandated Reporters</p> <p>Family</p> <p>Community Partners: Schools, Health Community, Mental Health, Substance Abuse Treatment Community, Faith Community, Domestic Violence Counselors, Other CBOs.</p>
F&E Practice Issues:		Strategies:
<p>Fewer calls from wealthy areas (including fewer hospitals drug screening tests done on newborns) in wealthy areas, greater awareness of prevention services in wealthy areas, more community services available there.</p> <p>Bias against single parents, teenaged parents.</p> <p>Judgments are made by social workers and the legal dependency system about fitness of kin, neighborhood location of kin, and/or the community.</p> <p><b>Core Issue:</b> There isn't equal opportunity for accessing culturally competent services. Children of color are disadvantaged by the lack of language proficient service providers for non-English fluent families, practices that ignore or misinterpret families' culturally-specific strengths, and mismatches between the cultural background or expertise of foster parents and the children placed in their care.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Child abuse prevention, child safety programs outreach campaign</li> <li>❑ Develop new collaborations for prevention: minority-defined and minority-based models of family preservation and early intervention.</li> <li>❑ Expand kinship policy to extended family and non-blood relations.</li> <li>❑ Develop poverty-targeted intervention and support strategies CWS/TANF Partnership with community-based agencies; CWS must learn how to work with other systems.</li> <li>❑ Decision makers learn how to engage, assess, and motivate (assess motivation of) parents from the beginning.</li> <li>❑ New options for services are offered: Teaching homemaker, Family resource worker, Home visitor.</li> <li>❑ Intercultural communication training.</li> <li>❑ Multidisciplinary team training, ongoing.</li> <li>❑ CWS located in neighborhood schools, community centers.</li> <li>❑ Safety planning.</li> </ul>

CWS Stakeholders Revised DRAFT 5/19/03

## PERMANENCY & CHILD WELL BEING

### Decision Points Where Fairness & Equity can be Addressed & Evaluated

<b><u>Point in Case Flow:</u></b>	<b><u>Decision Options:</u></b>	<b><u>Decision Maker:</u></b>
Case Plan Actions/Goal: Optimal Initial Placement (After face-to-face) a.k.a. “Foster Care Entrance”	Remain Home Placement with: Shelter Kin Care Foster Care Group Home Shared Family Care 23 hr place of safety Institutional Care	Social Worker +/-or Team Members May include police May include supervisor
<b>F&amp;E Practice Issues:</b>		<b>Strategies:</b>

**Core Issue: Children of color (especially African-American) enter foster care at higher rates, even when they and their families have the same characteristics as comparable white children and families.**

**Individual Child Welfare Worker/Team Bias:**

- Judgment of kin/neighborhood location of kin/community (Bias against kin “apple does not fall far from the tree”; expectation/obligation to care for family w/out govt. help; judgment of neighborhood as “unsafe”)
- Neighborhood context (afraid to go into neighborhood)
- Stereotyping on the basis of ethnicity, race, age, gender, sexual orientation, economic class, religion, substance abuse status, other
- Inability to speak the family’s language and/ or unavailability of bilingual staff or translators
- Gang membership bias (“break up the gang” rationale might be used to cover bias)
- To “improve” child’s “quality of life” through placement in “safer” neighborhood +/- or with more “financially secure” caretakers, 2-parent families (see also system bias below)
- Transference/countertransference
- Single decision-maker may enhance bias:
  - No checks and balances
  - Desire to avoid exposure

**Safety planning, removal may not always be needed.**

**System Bias:**

- To “improve” child’s “quality of life” through placement in “safer” neighborhood +/- or with more “financially secure” caretakers, 2-parent families (see also individual bias above)
- Constrained timeframes
- Most readily available placement versus the best placement (include ICPC)
- Protect the system as opposed to best interest of the child/best practice
- Judicial culture/bias
- Equally skilled baseline of child welfare team members not in place
- Shared costs—funds travel with the child

**To Address Individual Child Welfare Worker/Team Bias:**

- ❑ Collaborative supervision to identify and address biases
- ❑ Expand kinship to extended family & non-blood relations
- ❑ Team approach required; min. of 2 agency staff for all emergency responses
- ❑ Standardize safety decision making tool and provide training on how to use
- ❑ Expectations/requirement for family inclusion
- ❑ Engage community as part of the “solution”
- ❑ Utilizing community leaders as resources and/or to engage community members
- ❑ Require Cross-Systems Training specific to fairness and equity; include:
  - ❑ Interactive Intercultural Communication training, including dynamics of communities
  - ❑ Access to experts, including birth parent advocates
  - ❑ Training of community members, paraprofessionals (including birth parent advocates)
  - ❑ Training in navigating dangerous environments
- ❑ Recruit and retain staff from the community, and that reflect community
- ❑ Identify Indian heritage if not identified earlier and comply with ICWA
- ❑ Clarify shared responsibilities

**System Bias:**

- ❑ Organizational culture that promotes “healthy skepticism”, (meaning staff have the agency’s “permission” to question assumptions) and models, principles, practices of fairness & equity
- ❑ Expectation of the worker modeled at all levels of organization (parallel process)
- ❑ Community capacity building
- ❑ Neighborhood-based services, family resource centers in self-identified communities
- ❑ Co-locate staff in community to engage and welcome; architecture matters, needs to be approachable and accessible layout; welcoming (Drug Endangered Children team process is a valuable collaborative model)
- ❑ Need written policies and strategies to address political pressures
- ❑ Use data to identify specific concerns at individual and system level

<p><b><u>Point in Case Flow:</u></b></p> <p>Case Planning: Plan Development/Evaluation <a href="#">Reunification Services</a></p>	<p><b><u>Decision Options:</u></b></p> <p><u>Placement:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Family restoration</li> <li>-Continue initial placement</li> <li>-Change placement</li> </ul> <p><u>Focus of Services:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Family restoration</li> <li>-Early reunification</li> <li>-Alternate perm planning</li> <li>-Fast track</li> <li>-Successful youth transition</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Decision Maker:</u></b></p> <p>Team and family Attorney for family &amp; minor(s) CASA <a href="#">AOD</a> Counselors The Court</p>
F&E Practice Issues:		Strategies:
<p><b>Core Issue: Length of Stay.</b> <u>Children of color remain in foster care for longer periods of time than white children.</u></p> <p><i><u>Fairness in Differential Response Track Assignment:</u></i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Who gets the case plan created outside the court process &amp; who has to go to court? Are these biases toward certain groups regarding likelihood of cooperation vs. resistance? (<a href="#">by-pass biases</a>)</li> <li>▪ Who is involved in team decision-making?</li> </ul> <p><b>Core Issue: Limited Services.</b> <u>Families of color, when compared with white families, receive fewer services and have less contact with child welfare staff members.</u> <u>Consequently reunification services are less available to families of color.</u></p> <p><i><u>Fairness in Resource Distribution:</u></i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Equal access to services by group</li> <li>▪ Availability of services by neighborhood</li> <li>▪ Unequal enforcement of children's legal rights to services</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Designate a team member to reviews plan &amp; process for F &amp; E</li> <li>❑ Raise question of F &amp; E verbally to team for feedback</li> <li>❑ Set of written F &amp; E issues to be addressed/issues to be examined</li> <li>❑ Written policies promoting F &amp; E and guiding action/practice</li> <li>❑ Needs-driven case plan vs. service availability-driven case plan (law protects children who because of disability are entitled to certain services)</li> <li>❑ Develop service availability/resources</li> <li>❑ <b><a href="#">Decision makers learn how to engage, assess, and motivate (assess motivation of) parents from the beginning.</a></b></li> </ul>

<p><b><u>Point in Case Flow:</u></b></p> <p>Permanency Planning Outcomes: Permanency Outcomes</p>	<p><b><u>Decision Options:</u></b></p> <p><u>Permanency Options:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Family Restoration</li> <li>-Adoption-Kin</li> <li>-Adoption-Non-Kin</li> <li>-Guardianship-Kin</li> <li>-Guardianship-Non-Kin</li> <li>-Other new permanency possibilities</li> </ul> <p><u>Alternative Permanency:</u></p> <p>Successful transition to adulthood</p>	<p><b><u>Decision Maker:</u></b></p> <p>Team, <a href="#">including the</a> Family, The Court</p>
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<b>F&amp;E Practice Issues:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>
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<p><b>Core Issue: Family Reunification.</b> Children of color experience reunification at lower rates than white children.</p> <p><b>Core Issue: Adoption Processes.</b> Children of color who are legally available for adoption wait longer for an adoptive placement when compared with white children, and they are less likely to be placed at all.</p> <p><u><i>Fairness in Pursuit of Permanency Options:</i></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Are older kids of certain groups less likely to have a permanence outcome than kids of other groups? (Adoption of African American males over 2 years of age is less likely.)</li> <li>▪ Children of color and older kids considered less likely for adoption (anti-adoption bias)</li> <li>▪ Angry kids w/ behavioral problems or placed in group homes are less likely to be seen as adoptable</li> </ul> <p><u><i>Fairness in Preparation for Successful Transition:</i></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Probation kids excluded from STEP &amp; THPP</li> <li>▪ Resources allocated to “most adoptable”</li> <li>▪ Probation kids excluded from STEP, THPP and THPP Plus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full implementation of concurrent planning</li> <li>• Reassess the level of risk reduction for reunification of youth aged 12 and over (e.g., is it safe for youth to reunify now?)</li> <li>• Continue to assess relationships of youth aged 12 and over and continue to work towards permanency on their behalf</li> <li>• Make non-relative guardianship a more available option by considering emotional permanency for youth and the commitment of the prospective guardian.</li> <li>• Remove financial disincentives for caregivers and youth to exit.</li> <li>• Fund specialized recruitment of resource families at the state and local levels</li> <li>• Educate the community-at-large to the adoptability of all children</li> <li>• Expand training and support for resource families</li> <li>▪ Reexamine individual agency policies that reflect bias</li> <li>▪ Provide training to workers to address biases re: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Adoptability of all children</li> <li>▪ Out of state/out of county adoptions</li> <li>▪ Placements with single/working/gay/lesbian parents</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b><a href="#">Offer Independent Living Programs to all eligible foster youth.</a></b></p>
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<p><b><u>Point in Case Flow:</u></b></p> <p><b>Transition out of the system</b> Post-Permanency Supports</p>	<p><b><u>Decision Options:</u></b></p> <p><b>Services for education past age 18</b></p>	<p><b><u>Decision Makers:</u></b></p> <p><b>Family</b> <b>Community Partners</b></p>
F&E Practice Issues:		Strategies:
<p><b>Core Issue: Lack of Culturally Competent Services.</b> Children of color are disadvantaged by the lack of language proficient service providers for non-English fluent families, practices that ignore or misinterpret families’ culturally-specific strengths, and mismatches between the cultural background or expertise of foster parents and the children placed in their care.</p> <p><b>Youth of color (dependents) are disproportionately represented in the juvenile justice system.</b></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ <b>Develop minority-defined and minority-based models of family preservation and aftercare; including post-adoption wraparound services.</b></li> <li>❑ <b>Develop poverty-targeted intervention and support strategies CWS/TANF Partnership.</b></li> <li>❑ <b>CWS University/College Partnerships must be developed.</b></li>   <li>❑ <b>Collaborate with juvenile justice probation officers and others (e.g., substance abuse treatment personnel).</b></li> <li>❑ <b>Training for social workers and foster parents to help youth avoid “blowing” placements.</b></li> </ul>